

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the
5 Commission on Equitable Public University Funding Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds all of the
7 following:

8 (1) Historical and continued systemic racism has
9 created significant disparities in college access,
10 affordability, and completion for Black, Latinx, and other
11 underrepresented and historically underserved students in
12 this State.

13 (2) Improvements in postsecondary access, completion,
14 and success rates are required in order to meet State
15 goals for equity in attainment and will require further
16 investments in the higher education system to support
17 historically underrepresented and underserved groups,
18 including Black, Latinx, and low-income students in
19 particular.

20 (3) This State's approach to funding education has
21 contributed to racial and socioeconomic inequities in
22 access to resources and educational outcomes.

23 (4) Great strides have been made in this State in

1 addressing inequity in funding the kindergarten through
2 grade 12 public school system, including the adoption of
3 an evidence-based funding formula, which has resulted in
4 new funds being targeted to the highest-need districts.

5 (5) Adequate, equitable, and stable investment in
6 higher education is the key to ensuring that every
7 institution of higher education can provide adequate
8 academic, financial, and social-emotional support and
9 services that improve persistence and completion.

10 (6) In this State, higher education appropriations
11 have effectively been cut in half since fiscal year 2002.
12 Institutions of higher education serving higher
13 percentages of Black students are more reliant on State
14 funds and have been disproportionately harmed by this
15 disinvestment in higher education.

16 (7) As a result of historic underfunding and level
17 cuts to institutions of higher education, this State's
18 public universities have needed to increase tuition to
19 make up the funding shortfalls.

20 (8) Combined with the high cost of college and
21 insufficient State financial aid, racial income and wealth
22 disparities caused by structural racism contribute to the
23 accumulation of student debt and make college enrollment
24 and persistence more challenging for Black and Latinx
25 students.

26 (9) Despite similar numbers of Black high school

1 graduates, about 25,000 fewer Black students enrolled in
2 institutions of higher education in this State in 2018
3 compared to 2008.

4 (10) State appropriations make it possible for
5 colleges to provide essential academic services,
6 social-emotional support and services, and institutional
7 aid to students to improve student persistence and
8 completion.

9 (11) This State must strategically invest in higher
10 education to address wide disparities in degree
11 completion. Public community colleges currently graduate
12 Black and Latinx students at a rate of 14% and 26% within 3
13 years, respectively, compared to 38% of white students. At
14 public universities, Black and Latinx students currently
15 graduate at a rate of 34% and 49%, respectively, compared
16 to 66% of white students, within 6 years.

17 (12) This State has a moral obligation and economic
18 interest in dismantling and reforming structures that
19 create or exacerbate racial and socioeconomic inequities
20 in higher education.

21 (13) This State benefits from a public higher
22 education system that receives adequate and stable
23 resources for student success and that strategically uses
24 those resources to maximize the potential of each public
25 institution of higher education and to maximize the
26 benefits to this State, including, but not limited to,

1 improved college access and attainment and higher median
2 wages for all residents, reduced income inequalities,
3 improved economic output and innovation, increased access
4 and engagement in world-class research opportunities, and
5 improved college enrollment, persistence, and completion
6 of underrepresented and historically underserved students,
7 including Black and Latinx students and students from
8 low-income families.

9 Section 10. Commission on Equitable Public University
10 Funding; purpose.

11 (a) There is created the Commission on Equitable Public
12 University Funding.

13 (b) The purpose of the Commission is to, at a minimum,
14 recommend specific data-driven criteria and approaches to the
15 General Assembly to adequately, equitably, and stably fund
16 public universities in this State and to evaluate the existing
17 funding methods used for public universities.

18 Section 15. Membership; administrative support;
19 compensation.

20 (a) The membership of the Commission shall include, at a
21 minimum:

22 (1) One member of the Senate appointed by the
23 President of the Senate, who shall serve as
24 co-chairperson.

1 (2) One member of the House of Representatives
2 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
3 who shall serve as co-chairperson.

4 (3) The chairperson of the Board of Higher Education
5 or a designee, who shall serve as co-chairperson.

6 (4) One member appointed by the Governor, who shall
7 serve as co-chairperson.

8 (5) One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority
9 Leader of the Senate.

10 (6) One member of the House of Representatives
11 appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of
12 Representatives.

13 (7) The Chairperson of the Illinois Student Assistance
14 Commission or a designee.

15 (8) Twelve members representing the public
16 universities in this State each appointed by the President
17 of each public university.

18 (9) One member representing a higher education
19 advocacy organization focused on eliminating disparities
20 in college completion in this State for low-income and
21 first-generation college students and students of color
22 appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

23 (10) One member representing a statewide advocacy
24 organization focused on improving educational and
25 employment opportunities for women and adults appointed by
26 the Board of Higher Education.

1 (11) One member representing a statewide advocacy
2 organization focused on developing an equitable
3 birth-to-career educational system appointed by the Board
4 of Higher Education.

5 (12) One member representing a statewide organization
6 that advocates for alternative education and bridge
7 programs and the re-enrollment of students in this State
8 appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

9 (13) One member representing a fiscal policy research
10 organization focused on the impact that State-level budget
11 and tax policies have on equitable education funding
12 solutions appointed by the Board of Higher Education.

13 (14) Two members representing an organization that
14 advocates on behalf of public university faculty members
15 who are each employed by a different university appointed
16 by the Board of Higher Education.

17 (15) One health care expert from the public higher
18 education arena appointed by the Board of Higher
19 Education, in consultation with the presidents and
20 chancellors of the public universities.

21 (16) One member who has legal expertise in higher
22 education funding and finance appointed by the Board of
23 Higher Education.

24 (17) One postsecondary student enrolled at a public
25 university in this State appointed by the Board of Higher
26 Education.

1 (b) The Board of Higher Education shall recognize and
2 consider the representation of underrepresented and
3 historically underserved groups, including those who are
4 Black, Latinx, or from low-income families, and the racial and
5 geographical diversity of this State when making appointments
6 to the Commission.

7 (c) The co-chairpersons may identify and invite experts to
8 speak to the Commission on issues, including, but not limited
9 to, higher education funding, finance, health care, and
10 research and development.

11 (d) The Board of Higher Education shall provide
12 administrative support to the Commission, including any
13 related workgroups, and shall be responsible for administering
14 the Commission's operations and ensuring that the requirements
15 of this Act are met.

16 (e) The members of the Commission shall serve without
17 compensation for their services as members of the Commission.

18 Section 20. Meetings; reports.

19 (a) The Commission shall meet at least once per quarter
20 beginning no later than October 15, 2021.

21 (b) On or before July 1, 2023, the Commission shall
22 deliver to the General Assembly and publish on the Board of
23 Higher Education's Internet website or otherwise make publicly
24 available a report on the Commission's recommendations,
25 including specific criteria and funding approaches in

1 accordance with all applicable laws, to establish an
2 equity-based funding model for the allocation of State funds
3 to public universities. The recommendations included in the
4 report must be equity-centered and consider all of the
5 following areas:

6 (1) Remediating inequities in funding that have led to
7 disparities in access, affordability, and completion for
8 underrepresented and historically underserved student
9 groups, including students who are Black, Latinx, or from
10 low-income families.

11 (2) Ensuring that this State adequately, equitably,
12 and stably funds public institutions of higher education
13 in a manner that recognizes historical and current
14 inequities impacting underrepresented minorities' higher
15 education access and completion.

16 (3) Providing incentives to all 4-year institutions of
17 higher education in this State to enroll underrepresented
18 and historically underserved student groups, including
19 students who are Black, Latinx, or from low-income
20 families, in proportion to the diversity of this State's
21 population.

22 (4) Allowing ongoing monitoring and continuous
23 improvement of the public university funding models by
24 requiring transparency and accountability in how State
25 appropriations are expended and identifying a mechanism to
26 study and review the implementation of any funding model

1 developed and the long-term implications of this Act.

2 (5) Creating guidelines for how funding is distributed
3 during times of significant economic hardship, as defined
4 by the Commission, so that public institutions of higher
5 education are able to adequately, equitably, and stably
6 serve students.

7 (6) Ensuring that this State adequately and stably
8 funds public institutions of higher education that serve
9 underrepresented and historically underserved student
10 groups, including students who are Black, Latinx, or from
11 low-income families, and graduate and professional
12 students, including doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and
13 veterinarians.

14 (7) Supporting the diverse individual mission of each
15 public university, including its commitment to research
16 and health care enterprises that serve and enhance the
17 well-being of the residents of this State.

18 (8) Fostering the economic activity and innovation
19 generated by a university's activities, while recognizing
20 the impact historic funding inequities may have had on the
21 university's activities.

22 (9) Taking into consideration the percentage of
23 institutional aid provided from an institution's annual
24 budget.

25 (10) Taking into consideration the number of
26 undergraduate students engaged in research at each

1 university.

2 (11) Supporting institutional efforts to recruit and
3 retain world-class faculty and university leaders.

4 (12) Ensuring stable and adequate funding for all
5 institutions and that all universities are held harmless
6 to their current funding level. The Commission may
7 consider and report approaches to and the impact of a hold
8 harmless funding provision for institutions of higher
9 education as part of its final recommendations.

10 (13) Taking into consideration the long-term
11 implications and outcomes of the funding systems.

12 The recommendations must fulfill the principles
13 established by the Board of Higher Education's Strategic Plan.
14 The recommendations may also be informed by the data-driven
15 findings and recommendations established by the Chicago State
16 University Equity Working Group or other groups researching
17 equity in higher education and higher education funding and be
18 aligned to this State's postsecondary attainment goal and
19 related equity targets.

20 Section 25. Compliance. Notwithstanding any other law or
21 provision to the contrary, all public institutions of higher
22 education and State agencies regulating public institutions of
23 higher education shall furnish such data and information to
24 the Commission as the Commission deems necessary to fulfill
25 the requirements of this Act.

1 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
2 becoming law.